

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for recording interactions reflected in messages, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the first participant and the second participant, wherein the message is addressed to said second participant;

wherein said first participant is one of a requestor and a provider and the second participant is the other of the requestor and the provider;

wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol address;

wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;

wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in response to requests addressed to the particular address;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said requestor and said provider;

based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:

determining what content, is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;

before the content is delivered to the requestor:

determining whether the requestor is in a first set of users or is in a second set of users, wherein each user in the first set of users is required to pre-authorize payment for the content, wherein each user in the second set of users is not required to pre-authorize payment for the content;

in response to the determining that the requestor is ~~required to pre-authorize payment for the content in the first set of users~~, sending the requestor a payment authorization request message;

in response to detecting that the requestor has authorized payment for the content, retransmitting the message to allow the requestor to obtain the content;

wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
sending data about the payment to a billing service in response to said determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein:

the third party performs the step of requesting payment authorization on behalf of the provider.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:

using said log to charge a particular participant for said content, wherein said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73 further comprising the computer-implemented step of:

reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the content;
 - determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content;
 - and

determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and

based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further wherein the message is a response from the provider and includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide the content.

12.–15.(Canceled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the requestor accesses the content.

17–24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

26–29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor ~~requires pre-authorization for the content is in the first set of users or is in the second set of users.~~

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

32. (Canceled)

33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 31 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Canceled)

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the provider to obtain the content.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 36 wherein the step of determining whether the provider is an authorized partner further comprises the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile;

if the content does involve a fee, then

establishing a secure connection with the provider; and

authenticating the provider by using an authentication mechanism.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a first participant to a second participant prior to said message arriving at said second participant;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the first participant and the second participant, wherein the message is addressed to said second participant;

wherein said first participant is one of a requestor and a provider and the second participant is the other of the requestor and the provider;

wherein the message is addressed to or addressed from a particular address, the particular address being a unique Internet Protocol address;

wherein the particular address is associated with the provider;

wherein the provider provides a plurality of different types of content in response to requests addressed to the particular address;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said requestor and said provider;
based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:
determining what content is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
before the content is delivered to the requestor:
determining whether the requestor is in a first set of users or is in a second set of users, wherein each user in the first set of users is required to pre-authorize payment for the content, wherein each user in the second set of users is not required to pre-authorize payment for the content;
in response to the determining that the requestor is ~~required to pre-authorize payment for the content in the first set of users~~, sending the requestor a payment authorization request message;
in response to detecting that the requestor has authorized payment for the content, retransmitting the message to allow the requestor to obtain the content.

39. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

using said log to charge a particular participant for said content, wherein said particular participant is one of said first participant and said second participant.

40. (Canceled)

41. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or second participant is to pay for the content.

42. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by a billing system.

43. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that a particular participant of the first participant and second participant must pre-pay for the content;

determining whether the particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content;
and

determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

44. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile

associated with the requestor; and

based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 wherein the message is a response from the provider and includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide the content.

47. (Canceled)

48. (Canceled)

49. (Canceled)

50. (Canceled)

51. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors,

causes the one or more processors to perform the step of decrementing an account balance of the first participant or second participant when the requestor accesses the content.

52–59. (Canceled)

60. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

61–64. (Canceled)

65. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

66. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

67. (Canceled)

68. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 66 wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

69. (Canceled)

70. (Canceled)

71. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38 further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and

if the provider is an authorized partner, then

retransmitting the message to the provider to obtain the content.

72. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 71 wherein instructions for determining whether the provider is an authorized partner further comprise one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the content involves a fee by inspecting a provider profile;

if the content does involve a fee, then

establishing a secure connection with the provider; and

authenticating the provider by using an authentication mechanism.

73. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
sending data to a billing service based on the log.
74. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein:
the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device.
75. (Canceled)
76. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 73, further comprising, at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.
77. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising billing the provider for providing the content.
- 78.–83. (Canceled)
84. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
sending data to a billing service based on the log.
85. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, wherein:

the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device;.

86. (Canceled)

87. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 84, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.

88. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
sending data about the payment to a billing service in response to said determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

89. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform:

billing the provider for providing the content.

90.-97. (Canceled)

98. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising identifying the provider based on the address and determining the type of the content based upon a URL path.

99. (Canceled)

100. (Canceled)

101. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further comprising identifying the provider based on the address and determining the type of the content based upon a URL path.

102.-115. (Canceled)

116. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a provider to a requestor, prior to said

message being received by the requestor;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed

between the provider and the requestor, wherein the message is addressed

to the requestor;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from

said requestor and said provider;

wherein the message includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide

content included in the message;

based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:
reading the price from the message;
sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based on the price that was extracted from the message by the software managed by the third party;
wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

117. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116 further comprising the steps of:
determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;
wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

118. (Canceled)

119. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising billing the provider for providing the content.

120.–123. (Canceled)

124. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, wherein:
the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device.

125. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:

at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;

wherein the billing data sent to the billing service is based on the log.

126. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 125, further comprising, at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.

127. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 125, wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.

128. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 125, further comprising the computer-implemented step of:

reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by the billing service.

129. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:

the third party requesting payment authorization for the price from the requestor on behalf of the provider.

130. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 116, further comprising:

determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content;

determining whether the particular participant requestor has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and

determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant requestor has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

131. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

132. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the step of decrementing an account balance of the requestor based on the price.

133. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

134. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 116, further comprising inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor ~~requires pre-authorization for the content is in the first set of users or is in the second set of users.~~

135. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

136. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 135, wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

137. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 116, further comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the requestor.

138. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:
determining what content, of the plurality of different types of content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;
determining whether said content has billing implications;
if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based at least in part on the determined content.

139. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

intercepting a message that has been sent from a provider to a requestor, prior to said message being received by the requestor;

wherein intercepting the message is performed by an intercepting device deployed between the provider and the requestor, wherein the message is addressed to the requestor;

wherein the intercepting device is managed by a third party that is different from said requestor and said provider;

wherein the message includes a price at which the provider is willing to provide content included in the message;

based at least on the intercepted message, software managed by the third party performing the steps of:

reading the price from the message;

sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based on the price that was extracted from the message by the software managed by the third party;

wherein the method is performed by one or more computer devices.

140. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message;

wherein sending data to said billing service occurs in response to said determining that said content is being or has been provided to said requestor by said provider through, at least in part, the intercepted message.

141. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of billing the provider for providing the content.

142. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, wherein: the software managed by the third party is executed by the intercepting device.

143. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:
at the intercepting device, generating a log of said message;
wherein the billing data sent to the billing service is based on the log.

144. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of, at an aggregation engine external to the intercepting device, reading the log, wherein the software managed by the third party executes at an aggregation engine.

145. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, wherein the log includes information to indicate how much the first participant or the second participant is to pay for the content.

146. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 143, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

reading a plurality of logs, including said log, at an aggregation engine that places access information contained in said plurality of logs into the format required by the billing service.

147. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

the third party requesting payment authorization for the price from the requestor on behalf of the provider.

148. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content;
determining whether the particular participant requestor has sufficient funds to pay for the content; and

determining how to handle said message based on whether said particular participant requestor has sufficient funds to pay for the content.

149. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

inspecting one of a provider profile associated with the provider or a requestor profile associated with the requestor; and
based on the provider profile or the requestor profile, determining that the requestor must pre-pay for the content.

150. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of decrementing an account balance of the requestor based on the price.

151. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of updating a requestor profile to award the requestor a prize for having requested said content.

152. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors,

causes the one or more processors to perform the step of inspecting a profile to determine whether the requestor requires pre-authorization for the content.

153. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the requestor has funds to pay for the content based on an authorization source.

154. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 153, wherein the authorization source is one of a profile, a billing system, and a billing scheme of an access provider.

155. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 139, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining whether the provider is an authorized partner; and
if the provider is an authorized partner, then
retransmitting the message to the requestor.

156. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium of Claim 38, further storing one or more sequences of instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, causes the one or more processors to perform the step of:

determining what content, of the plurality of different types of content provided by the provider at the particular address, is being provided by or requested from the provider in the message;

determining whether said content has billing implications;

if said content has billing implications, sending billing data to a billing service, the billing data being based at least in part on the determined content.